

Consul General's remarks (as delivered)
Bethlehem University
May 15, 2007, 11 am

Good morning. I'm pleased to be here today on this important day for Bethlehem University -- the feast of St. John Baptist De La Salle -- for the dedication of the renovated Administration Building. The U.S. government, through USAID's American Schools and Hospitals Abroad program, is pleased to have been able to provide a grant for the renovation of this building that will be renamed De La Salle Hall.

The U.S. government and Bethlehem University have enjoyed a long history of cooperation. Many members of the faculty of Bethlehem University have participated in U.S. exchange programs. The University has also hosted numerous U.S. cultural and speaker programs here on campus. And, there have been three separate ASHA grants to fund major capital projects so that the university can better serve the next generation of Palestinians leaders. These ASHA projects have included the construction of the Student Social and Cultural Center, of Millennium Hall, and the renovation of this Administration Building which we are commemorating here today.

I am proud to say that the United States has long been a supporter of higher education in the West Bank and Gaza. USAID has provided master's degree scholarships to talented Palestinian students and is implementing a Palestinian Faculty Development Program which is aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning at institutions of higher education in the West Bank and Gaza. We have also supported training programs for Palestinian teachers and professors of the English language. We have funded computer labs for Palestinian community colleges; and we have provided scholarships for students at technical colleges.

Through our assistance, the United States is actively engaged in efforts to promote Palestinian economic development and to meet the basic needs of the Palestinian people. The United States expects to provide over 181 million dollars to the Palestinian people in 2007 to support various economic development programs, to advance democracy and civil society, and to support the Palestinian private sector.

Beyond our assistance, the United States remains committed to President Bush's vision of two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security, and to the Roadmap as the way forward toward

that goal. Secretary Rice will continue her efforts to assist the parties on the pathway to peace. As she has said, the Palestinian people have waited too long for a state of their own, and we will continue to support them in working toward this goal.

In closing, I want to thank you very much for inviting me and my colleagues to celebrate with you the dedication of the renovated building now known as De La Salle Hall. On behalf of the U.S. government, I look forward to many future cooperative endeavors with the administration, faculty, and students of Bethlehem University.

Thank you again.